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First Committee
23rd Meeting
Wednesday, 4 November 1998, 10 a.m.
New York

Chairman: Mr. Mernier . . . . . (Belgium)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda items 63 to 80 (*continued*)

Action on all draft resolutions submitted under all items

The Chairman: I informed members of the Committee at the close of our meeting yesterday morning of the draft resolutions on which the Committee would proceed today to take decisions. Upon a request from delegations to make the order of action on draft resolutions clearer, I asked the Secretariat to produce informal paper No. 1, which members have just received, containing a list of draft resolutions in clusters 1 through 10 that we will take up today.

(*spoke in French*)

I should like to make a clarification. Yesterday some delegations asked explicitly that certain draft resolutions be taken up today. Of course, we took note. Meanwhile, other delegations opposed those particular draft resolutions being taken up today, so members will not find them in the paper. Does any delegation wish to comment on that informal paper?

I call on the representative of Egypt.

Mr. Karem (Egypt): I have worked with you, Mr. Chairman, for so long and know of your far-sightedness, and it is with regret that I speak today, definitely not in any way contradicting what you have mentioned. Over many years I have grown to respect you and admire your excellent conduct of work, but we had an agreement announced from the floor yesterday that a certain draft resolution, A/C.1/53/L.3, would be acted upon today and acted upon as the first draft resolution in the cluster with which we are to begin. That agreement, which was in a formal meeting of the First Committee, was reported back to my capital, so when we end up today with an informal paper that does not incorporate draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.3, questions and doubts are raised in my mind. My hunch is that a certain delegation spoke to you, Mr. Chairman, after the meeting ended and you took that request into consideration. The fact remains, however, that we had an agreement in a formal meeting that A/C.1/53/L.3 would be acted upon today as the first draft resolution. That is fact number one.

Fact number two, which I wish to point out at this juncture, is that you, Mr. Chairman, mentioned that a certain delegation in the past 24 hours had requested a delay. We wish to know from the floor which delegation that is. We insist on knowing which delegation that is. It must become known to the entire Committee that a certain delegation is linking actions on different proposals dealing with different agenda items. I am referring to the fact that draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.3 deals with agenda item 67. Draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.21/Rev.1 deals with a separate and different agenda item, namely, item 74. These are two separate agenda items. That is fact number two.

Fact number three: on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.3 there are no ongoing consultations. It is a consensus draft resolution. There has been no change from the language in last year's resolution. All the parties agree to that, and all the parties agree to preserve the consensus. So far as my own delegation is concerned, if a certain party wants to

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depart from the consensus, that is their prerogative. Let them do that. Let them bear the responsibility. That is perfectly all right so far as we are concerned, but we are not willing for different items to be held hostage because of certain matters which we cannot understand. I will not go into this matter in any more length but will leave it, Mr. Chairman, to your judgement.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): I wish to recall what I said yesterday. Ambassador Karem is absolutely right. We agreed yesterday that that draft resolution would be part of today's programme, subject, of course — and this was repeated I think on several occasions yesterday — to no delegation's asking for a postponement of the voting. The Chairman and the Bureau cannot take that prerogative away from any delegation. Any delegation at any time — and I have tried to limit that time to the end of the day preceding the vote — has the right to ask for a postponement of the voting on any draft resolution, as was done with regard to that particular draft resolution.

I should also like to say that the Chairman cannot firmly promise that a particular draft resolution will be taken up at any particular time. That is in the hands of delegations, and although I can express my regret, unfortunately we cannot act otherwise.

I hope that this explanation will satisfy the Egyptian delegation. I would add that the Chair cannot speculate on why a delegation might have asked for a postponement. That delegation might be in negotiations or awaiting instructions. It is not up to the Chair to decide why a delegation might have asked for a postponement of the voting.

I call on the representative of South Africa.

Mr. Goosen (South Africa): I know that I have limited experience in the First Committee, but I have managed to attend the last four sessions, and it seems to me that strange things are happening at the moment. I express regret to our colleagues in this Committee that we need to delay this meeting because of dealing with these kinds of issues first, but I think we need to work out the rules of the game before we play the game.

First, my delegation contacted the Committee Secretary's office this morning to request a delay in the voting on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.39. I am willing to identify myself. South Africa is not concerned about that. I would defend the right of delegations wishing to request delays in action being taken on a draft resolution. I do not think it is necessary for myself, but others do have that right. We were then informed by the Committee Secretary that we needed to do it from the floor, which is a different procedure from what I understand to be the case. We have consulted the originators of A/C.1/53/L.39, and they are aware that we want to continue consultations with them on this text before it comes to a vote.

But it is the process here that is a bit of a worry to me. If a delegation such as ours, or any other delegation represented in this room, approaches the secretariat or the Chair with a request for a delay in taking a vote, we would expect that to be respected and not to be thrown back at us. That is the first point.

The second point is that yesterday, working quite actively with some minor disruption, we managed to work our way through nine draft resolutions, and if we look at the list of draft resolutions that lie on the table before us today we will see that there are rather more than nine. I know that you, Mr. Chairman, have great expectations for us, but I do not have as much faith in us as you have. I would be surprised if we actually made our way through all these resolutions and all these clusters today - pleasantly surprised, but surprised nevertheless.

The procedure that the First Committee has adopted in the past is to deal with matters cluster by cluster. Once we have finished, we then return to the first cluster. It is my presumption that we will follow that procedure again this year. In other words, in terms of your informal paper, Mr. Chairman, if we can finish, say, from cluster 1 to cluster 6 or, let us be hopeful and say cluster 7, then tomorrow morning we will start at cluster 8, 9 and 10 and work our way through all the clusters before reverting to cluster 1 again, with the exception, of course, that delegations may wish to raise special draft resolutions on which they would like the voting to be taken earlier. I would also be flexible on that. But I think a general approach such that even if we do not vote on all these clusters today then from tomorrow we would automatically revert back to the first draft resolution that was submitted under cluster 1 - this would be a change in procedure from that which we have followed in the past. I request your clarification, Mr. Chairman, on the two points that I have raised.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): First I should like to say once again that every delegation has the right to ask for a postponement of the voting on any draft resolution, including the ones set out in the informal paper distributed this morning. If delegations wish to do so from their seats, that is totally acceptable. If they wish to do so

by approaching the Chair privately, that is totally acceptable as well. However, the Chair will not identify such delegations from the podium without their agreement and will contact the delegation that has requested a postponement to find out whether it wishes to be identified or not. I think that is a fairly usual practice in international forums, and I should like to stick to it.

As to the order in which we will take up the draft resolutions, I would like us to begin with cluster 1 today and continue as far as we can. Tomorrow we will continue with the same list and order, beginning with the draft resolution that we have reached today. I hope that is clear. Let us be optimistic and assume that today we finish cluster 7; then tomorrow we will begin with cluster 8. We will begin again with cluster 1 when we have finished cluster 10. I do not wish to drag this discussion on procedure; is that procedure acceptable to delegations?

I call on the representative of South Africa.

Mr. Goosen (South Africa): As I said earlier, I think we need to establish the rules of the game before we play the game; otherwise we will end up playing different games. In the terms of the ruling you have just made, Mr. Chairman, you have built in a certain contradiction. Yesterday we worked our way through clusters 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5. So in the terms of the ruling you have just made on how we are going to operate from tomorrow, we should be beginning with cluster 6 today. However, on the understanding that the procedure adopted today is not going to become the norm, and that unless agreed by the whole Committee we would not automatically revert to cluster 1 every single day, we would be quite willing to go along with your proposal for today. But it would not be agreed as an automatic method of working through the voting process. We are quite comfortable to begin with the votes that you have suggested for today, Mr. Chairman, on the basis of requests from delegations; but I would again say that this should not set a precedent for the approach to our work in the future.

The Chairman *(interpretation from French):* I call on the representative of Brazil.

Mr. Felicio (Brazil): I know you want to move fast, Mr. Chairman, so I will be brief. You are right. Any delegation has the right to request the postponement of voting on any draft resolution. The only thing wrong here is that there has to be some transparency in this process.

You cannot, on the private request of a delegation, decide to postpone the voting on a draft resolution without consulting, for instance, the co-sponsors. In this regard, I feel obliged to firmly support the delegation of Egypt, which intervened at the start of the debate. If the delegation of Egypt wishes draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.3 to be put to the vote, this morning then, Mr. Chairman, you have to put it to a vote unless other delegations object and request, in public, that it be postponed, and then you can make a ruling. It is just a matter of transparency. You are right, but transparency has to be applied in our work.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): I would like to make a brief statement. Yesterday, several delegations approached me about general statements on clusters. I believe that some delegations did not understand that we were making general statements on each cluster when we took up the cluster for the first time. Today, therefore, we will allow every delegation that so wishes to make a general statement on clusters that have already been taken up. But in future I should like to make it very clear that general statements on each cluster will be made when that cluster is taken up for the first time, and not when we come to the cluster for the third or fourth time. Since yesterday was our first such meeting, today it will be possible to make statements on clusters 1 and 4. I should like to avoid this in future. If delegations have general statements, then they should make them the first time we come to that cluster. I hope I have made that clear.

I call on the representative of Algeria.

Mr. Mesdoua (Algeria) (*interpretation from French*): I do not intend to delay the progress of the work of the Committee in considering the draft resolutions before us. The representative of Brazil, preceded by the representatives of Egypt and South Africa, pointed out something that is extremely important and decisive for our work.

We fully respect the decision of the Chair yesterday, but every time there is a postponement the reason and the delegation responsible for that postponement must be given. The sponsors of the draft resolution must at least be able to know the reason for a postponement.

Yesterday evening we communicated to our authorities the fact that the Committee would take a decision on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.3 today, which means that we have given our authorities to understand something that is not true. The delegations concerned and the Committee must be told of a decision to postpone so that in future we can

properly inform our authorities. I think we should take a decision today in order to prevent such situations occurring again in future meetings. I think that will expedite our work.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): I should like to end this discussion by making two comments. First, no one in the room is disputing the right of any delegation to ask for the postponement of a vote on any draft resolution at any time. The desire of the Chairman is that any request for the postponement come in as early as possible — as I said yesterday, I seriously encourage every delegation to make such a request the day before if possible. Secondly, on the matter of the identification of the delegation requesting the postponement, the Bureau will meet today and will take a decision on the procedure to be followed in that regard.

I call on the representative of the Republic of Korea.

Mr. Shin (Republic of Korea): I want to respond briefly to your remarks that the general statement on each cluster will take place only once. Yesterday my delegation asked for the opportunity to make a general statement on each cluster because my delegation had understood that a general statement was not allowed when the Committee was dealing with the draft resolutions. That was the first we knew about general statements being allowed when taking action on each draft resolution. We have asked for instructions from our capital, and we wish to have the chance to make a general statement, not today but when several of the clusters come round again.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): That is exactly what I have just said. In view of the fact that yesterday there was an imperfect understanding of the rule, today, but only today,

(spoke in English)

each delegation will have the opportunity to make a general statement on clusters that have already been considered. So today delegations will have another opportunity to make general statements on the clusters that we considered yesterday, but in the future I will ask delegations, for the good order of our work, to make their general statements whenever we take up a new cluster for the first time. Today if delegations want to make a general statement on cluster 1, they will be able to do it. That is for today because there was some misunderstanding yesterday on that. But any time that we come again to a cluster, we should avoid general statements. If delegations have a general statement to make, please make it the first time that we consider the particular cluster on which they want to speak. Is that clear?

I call on the representative of Canada.

Mr. Moher (Canada): I would like very much to support your efforts, Mr. Chairman, to move us forward efficiently and effectively here. However, I do have a similar concern to that raised by the Republic of Korea. As you well know, Mr. Chairman, and as I think everyone else in this room knows, there are several draft resolutions on which sensitive negotiations and discussions are continuing. Your explanation would mean that it would be difficult to make a general statement on cluster 1, for example, at this stage in our proceedings. I hope that my understanding is not erroneous, but as those discussions progress, if there is a desire by any delegation, including the Canadian delegation, to make a general statement under any of the clusters, in the light of the evolution of those discussions and negotiations, I would hope that you would be generous enough to allow that to take place. I do not wish to press you too strongly at this point, but could the Bureau consider that and let us know? To us it is a fairly important consideration.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): I fully understand Canada's concerns, and of course the Chair and the Bureau will show the necessary flexibility on this question. Nevertheless, I would like us to stay as close as possible to the rules in general. Flexibility would allow all delegations to put forward their arguments at any point.

I call on the representative of Egypt.

Mr. Karem (Egypt): I should like to join those who have expressed support for your efforts, Mr. Chairman. We have full confidence in you. The remarks made by my colleague from Brazil were expressed in much better terms than I could express. You have wisely ruled that you will bring that matter to the attention of the Bureau this afternoon.

Here I would like to make two comments. When that issue is discussed, we must consider two matters. No request for a delay should be indefinite. We must fully understand the time sequence in which this kind of request is being seen. On draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.3 there have been two requests for delays, and my delegation has been requesting that the draft resolution be put to a vote by consensus by the First Committee.

The second point: what relationship, if any, does the request for a delay have to a process of ongoing consultation? In the case of draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.3, for example, and as I explained, there are no ongoing consultations. The text is sealed, lock, stock and barrel, so why the delay? There is no reason for the delay. There should be a reason for a delay. If there are ongoing consultations, that is fine. But in this case there are no ongoing consultations. I ask you, Mr. Chairman, to bear these caveats in mind when any request for a delay is discussed by the Bureau.

The Chairman *(interpretation from French):* I call on the representative of Mexico.

Mr. De Icaza (Mexico) (*interpretation from Spanish*): My delegation would like to make a general statement on cluster 1, but it cannot do so today for the simple reason that draft resolutions on cluster 1 keep coming forward. New draft amendments are coming out even today, and we are not in a position to make a statement on a cluster that is not yet complete. My delegation does, however, intend to make a general statement on the day when the draft resolutions in which it has an interest are to be adopted, not three or four days in advance. My delegation understands the concern of the Chair and the rule regarding one single statement being made at the beginning of consideration of each cluster rather than every time a cluster comes up. But that rule is balanced by another: at the beginning of each meeting, delegations can make general statements on any cluster that is to come up for discussion during that meeting.

Thus, I agree with you, Sir, that today is the last day that we can make general statements on cluster 1, provided we respect the rule that at the beginning of each meeting general statements can be made on any or all of the draft resolutions that are to come up for discussion at that meeting. That is how we balance the rules and make it possible for delegations to speak on those days when particular draft resolutions will come up for discussion, not a week in advance.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): I think the answer I gave to Canada applies equally well to Mexico.

I call on the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Mr. Dehghani (Islamic Republic of Iran): First, I wish to support the point raised by the Ambassador of Egypt regarding the rule of deferral. Secondly, I would like to ask that the consideration of draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.17/Rev.1 be deferred until Monday because I need instructions from my capital.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): I wish to point out that since informal paper No. 1 was distributed to delegations, requests for postponement have been made with regard to two draft resolutions: A/C.1/53/L.39, in cluster 6, and, as just proposed by the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran, A/C.1/53/L.17/Rev.1, in cluster 8.

We will now proceed to the consideration of the draft resolutions listed in the informal paper delegations have before them. I call first on delegations wishing to make general statements today on cluster 1, "Nuclear weapons".

If no delegation wishes to make a general statement on cluster 1 at this stage, we will now proceed to draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.37. I call on the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Mr. Dehghani (Islamic Republic of Iran): I should like the name of my delegation to be added to the list of sponsors of draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.37.

Mr. Abou-Hadid (Syrian Arab Republic): I would like to point out that in last preambular paragraph of the Arabic version of draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.37, some important words are missing. I ask the Secretariat to correct the Arabic text of the draft resolution.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): Due note has been taken of your comments.

We will now proceed to take action on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.37, entitled "Nuclear-weapon-free southern hemisphere and adjacent areas".

A separate vote has been requested on operative paragraph 3, which I shall read out:

(*spoke in English*)

> "*Welcomes* the steps taken to conclude further nuclear-weapon-free zone treaties on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among the States of the region concerned and calls upon all States to consider all relevant proposals, including those reflected in its

resolutions on the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in the Middle East and South Asia".

I hope that all delegations are clear on that.

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): My delegation would like a separate vote on the last three words in operative paragraph 3, "and South Asia".

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): I take note of the statement made by Pakistan. There is no very clear rule on this subject in the rules of procedure. We will vote on the three words as requested by Pakistan.

I call on the representative of South Africa on a point of order.

Mr. Goosen (South Africa): I am sorry to get involved in this, because it does appeal to my rather strange sense of humour, which I think is fairly well known to you, Mr. Chairman, but this is the first time I have heard of this. Are we voting on the word "and" or "South" or "Asia"? It seems rather unclear to me what we will be voting on, but if the delegation of Pakistan insists on using the mechanism of the First Committee to vote on three words out of context, we would certainly be willing to continue with the exercise.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): There is no rule of procedure that would enable us to take a decision.

I call on the representative of Mexico on a point of order.

Mr. De Icaza (Mexico) (*interpretation from French*): I wish to draw the Committee's attention to rule 129 of the rules of procedure:

(*spoke in Spanish*)

> "A representative may move that parts of a proposal or of an amendment should be voted on separately".

Obviously, in paragraph 3 the reference to one region is part of a proposal. The delegation of Pakistan is quite entitled to call for a separate vote on that. However, another delegation is entitled to object, and rule 129 goes on to explain the procedure. Thus far there have been no objections. When the rule says "parts", it obviously does not mean whole paragraphs; it could be a sentence or even a phrase that constitutes a part of a proposal. As we said, the reference to a geographical area is a part of a proposal.

The Chairman *(interpretation from French):* I call on the representative of Pakistan.

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): I just want to thank Ambassador De Icaza for once again coming to the rescue.

The Chairman *(interpretation from French):* I call on the representative of Andorra on a point of order.

Mr. Forner-Rovira (Andorra): I think the Ambassador of Pakistan is right and, if I understood correctly, what he is proposing is an amendment to operative paragraph 3 consisting of the elimination of the last few words. That to me is an amendment to operative paragraph 3, and we should consider it as such. It is up to you, Mr. Chairman, to make a ruling on whether we can proceed to vote on that amendment or if we need time to distribute the amendment. That is how we should understand the procedure.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): The proposal of Pakistan is to vote on part of the proposal. If we follow the rules of procedure, there has to be an objection to the proposal made by Pakistan, and I do not see any such objection in the room, so we will proceed to vote on the proposal made by Pakistan.

I call on the representative of Chile on a point of order.

Mr. González (Chile) (*interpretation from Spanish*): I am sorry to say that my delegation does not agree with the way Mexico came to the rescue of Pakistan's proposal. We will not object to the procedure, but we would like to make our position on this subject abundantly clear.

We have to consider in context what the rule means when it refers to a "proposal". Otherwise we will be on the verge of a surrealistic situation in which someone who does not like a definite article in a given paragraph can ask for a separate vote - on the word "the", or "only", or "urges", or anything else. We would end up with an interminable voting process, and from a political standpoint this would completely erode the substance of a draft.

I believe that traditional, customary practice acquires a kind of valid legal force: we vote on proposals, which is understood to mean draft resolutions, and on their operative paragraphs separately when they present problems or

controversies. Furthermore, we do not believe that this is the time or the place to propose the deletion of certain elements of a paragraph.

However, as I have said, we do not want to cause you problems, Mr. Chairman. We are prepared to go along with the voting, but we want to make our view very clear on this subject. In our opinion, we will not be doing justice to the Committee or to the results expected of it by the international community.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): Naturally, the objective of the First Committee is not to lose itself in interminable discussions on procedure. That being said, I have not heard any objection to considering the proposal made by Pakistan. The proposal will therefore be put to a vote.

I call on the representative of Argentina.

Ms. Martinic (Argentina) (*interpretation from Spanish*): I would just like to have a clarification. As I understood the Ambassador of Pakistan, he is proposing we take a separate vote on the words "and South Asia". The representative of Andorra offered an interpretation of Pakistan's request, saying that this might mean the elimination of these words. I am asking now exactly what we will be voting on.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): I call on the representative of Pakistan.

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): I did not think that this would start procedural turmoil in the Committee. What we are asking for - and for the benefit of my colleague from Chile I would add that this is quite normal in the United Nations, particularly in the Third Committee, where we vote on words and phrases and even commas — is a separate vote on the last three words in operative paragraph 3. The three words are "and South Asia". We are asking only for a separate vote, not for a deletion. Those who favour this can say "yes", those who oppose these words can say "no", and others can abstain.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): If I understood the Ambassador of Pakistan correctly, if the vote is in favour of the words "and South Asia", these three words are retained in paragraph 3. Do we agree on that?

I call on the representative of Israel.

Mr. Becher (Israel): If the outcome of this deliberation is that at the end we have operative paragraph 3 without the words "and South Asia", that will change the nature of this paragraph of the draft resolution. I will have to get new instructions from my Government and will have to ask for a deferral of the voting on the whole proposal.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): I propose that we proceed in order. First we will vote — if I am given time to push this procedure through to the end - on the three words "and South Asia".

I now call on those representatives who wish to speak in explanation of vote on these three words before a decision is taken.

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): Pakistan has sought the creation of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in South Asia for almost 25 years. Unfortunately, this objective has not received the kind of support that we would have wished from the international community and from the States concerned so as to translate it into reality. After the conduct of nuclear tests in South Asia this year and the declaration by one of the States that it is now a nuclear-weapon State, and consequent upon statements that nuclear weaponization has taken place and deployment is about to take place, my country considers that the goal of creating a nuclear-weapon-free zone in South Asia is no longer a realistic prospect. We have therefore not proposed a draft resolution on this issue at this session of the General Assembly, and it was our advice to the sponsors of this draft resolution that these three words should be suppressed since the countries concerned no longer believe this objective to be a realistic one. Unfortunately, the sponsors have chosen to retain these words, which we believe are redundant, and therefore my delegation will be constrained to abstain in the voting on these three words referring to South Asia.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): I call on the representative of Canada on a point of order.

Mr. Moher (Canada): I am not responding to my friend the Ambassador of Pakistan on the substance of this in any way, but I want absolute clarity on what we are doing and under what rule. If we are acting under rule 130, then we are voting on an amendment. If we are voting under some other procedure, would the Chair please inform me what rule it is. That is my first question.

The second question I wish to put is, if the voting on this text is just to get a feeling of the political opinion in

the room on these words, that is one thing. My understanding of the intervention of my colleague from Pakistan earlier was that he said he was not seeking an amendment. So if we vote on these three words, does the outcome of that vote determine whether these words stay in the draft resolution or not? If they go out, it is an amendment. Therefore, it would seem to me that rule 130 is the only rule that applies.

I must say, I find this procedure rather unique. Whether it is done in the Third Committee or not I leave to those who are more experienced than I, but before we go down this road I want a very clear understanding, first, of what rule we are acting under and, secondly, what the implications of the voting will be.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): As the Chair sees the situation, we are voting on a part of a proposal, under rule 129. If the vote that we are now going to hold is in favour of these three words — that is, if the Committee votes "yes" — then those three words will remain in operative paragraph 3. If the Committee votes "no" the three words will be deleted from operative paragraph 3.

(*spoke in English*)

If the Committee votes "yes" those three words will stay in operative paragraph 3. If the Committee votes "no" the words will be suppressed.

Is there any objection to this being put to the vote? If not, we will follow the procedure explained in rule 129.

I call on the representative of South Africa.

Mr. Goosen (South Africa): I do not have an objection, but I am asking for further clarification. I thought that the Ambassador of Pakistan was not asking for an amendment. If he is not asking for an amendment, what is the difference?

The Chairman *(interpretation from French):* I call on the representative of Austria.

Mr. Hajnoczi (Austria): May I ask for a suspension of 10 minutes?

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): If it is the wish of delegations, we will have a 10-minute break.

I call on the representative of Brazil on a point of order.

Mr. Felicio (Brazil): I am afraid, Mr. Chairman, you cannot suspend the meeting because the voting process has already started and you have already given the floor to the Ambassador of Pakistan, who made an explanation of vote, so we will have to continue the voting process.

The Chairman *(interpretation from French):* I call on the representative of Mexico.

Mr. De Icaza (Mexico) (*interpretation from Spanish*): May I draw your attention, Mr. Chairman, to rule 128:

> "After the Chairman has announced the beginning of voting no representative shall interrupt the voting except on a point of order in connection with the actual conduct of the voting."

That would exclude points of order to do with matters other than the conduct of the voting. It excludes points of order regarding suspension, postponement. and so on.

(*spoke in French*)

Voting cannot be interrupted, no matter what your friends from the secretariat say. I have never seen such a thing before. One cannot interrupt a voting process that has already begun.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): It seems that Austria's request cannot be accepted under the rules of procedure. We are in the midst of the voting procedure on those three words. I have explained the consequences of the voting. The Ambassador of Pakistan has explained his position before the voting. Does any other delegation wish to explain its position or vote before the voting? Are the consequences of the voting clear in everybody's mind?

I call on the representative of Canada.

Mr. Moher (Canada): I am sorry to interrupt you, Mr. Chairman. I think I interrupted you just when you were going to help me out. I want the question put very clearly.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): Let me repeat what I have already said several times. If delegations vote "no" it means the three words will be deleted. Is that clear? If delegations vote "yes" the three words will be retained in the text. Is that clear?

I call on the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Mr. Dehghani (Islamic Republic of Iran): I do not want to give an explanation of vote before the voting, but I am not yet clear. If we vote "yes", does that mean the words will be retained or deleted?

The Chairman: If delegations vote "yes" those three words will be retained in operative paragraph 3 of the draft resolution. That means that the operative paragraph does not change. If delegations vote "no" those words will be suppressed and the operative paragraph will have been changed. Is that clear?

I call on the representative of Syria.

Mr. Abou-Hadid (Syrian Arab Republic): There is a proposal by the Ambassador of Pakistan for a vote to delete the three words from this draft resolution. That was the first proposal, and it is still the same. So if the voting is on the three words the proposal is to delete. If we vote "yes" that means the words will be deleted, because we are voting on the proposal to delete the three words.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): I should like to say that as a diplomat I, like other representatives, have a side that enjoys semantic debates, but we need to move ahead. We have not yet adopted a single draft resolution and it is now a quarter past eleven.

However, we must be clear about the consequences of the vote. I repeat, if delegations vote "yes" the three words will be retained in the operative paragraph. If delegations vote "no" the three words will be deleted from the operative paragraph. I do not believe I could be any clearer than that.

I call on the representative of China.

Mr. Li Changhe (China) (*interpretation from Chinese*): I completely respect and trust your judgement. However, the Chinese delegation would like to explain its own understanding of this issue. The proposal of the Pakistani delegation is to have a separate vote. That separate vote will allow delegations to indicate their views on a certain paragraph, and specifically on these three words.

My delegation is of the view that whether the majority of delegations vote in favour of or against, these three words ought to be retained in this operative paragraph. I stress again that in my view, regardless of whether the final result is "yes" or "no", these three words should still be retained in operative paragraph 3. The result of the voting simply records the positions of different delegations on this matter. That is our understanding of this matter, but of course we respect your decision, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): I repeat, the Chair's position is that we are now going to vote without any more statements on procedure. If delegations vote "yes" the words will be retained; if delegations vote "no" the words will be deleted. The voting will now begin.

I call on the Secretary of the Committee to conduct the voting.

Mr. Lin Kuo-chung (Secretary of the Committee): The Committee will proceed to vote first on the last three words, "and South Asia", of operative paragraph 3 of draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.37. The draft resolution, entitled "Nuclear-weapon-free southern hemisphere and adjacent areas", was introduced by the representative of Brazil at the 17th meeting, on 28 October 1998. Besides the sponsors listed in the draft resolution, additional sponsors are listed in document A/C.1/53/INF/2/Add.1. The following countries have also become sponsors of the draft resolution: the Islamic Republic of Iran and Nigeria.

A "yes" vote will mean the three words will be retained in the paragraph. A "no" vote means those three words will be deleted.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Andorra, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Benin, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Canada, Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guinea, Guyana, Haiti, Hungary, Iceland, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lesotho, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Panama,

Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, San Marino, Senegal, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Venezuela, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against:
Bhutan, India

Abstaining:
Algeria, Bangladesh, Cuba, Cyprus, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Estonia, France, Israel, Latvia, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Sierra Leone, Sri Lanka, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uzbekistan, Viet Nam

The last three words of operative paragraph 3, "and South Asia", of draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.37 were retained by 118 votes to 2, with 21 abstentions.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): If no delegation wishes to explain its vote or position on the three words just retained, we shall now proceed to the voting on operative paragraph 3 in the same form as it appears, that is, with the three words "and South Asia".

(*spoke in English*)

If no delegation wishes to explain its position or vote before a decision is taken on operative paragraph 3, I call on the Secretary of the Committee to conduct the voting.

Mr. Lin Kuo-chung (Secretary of the Committee): The Committee will now proceed to the voting on operative paragraph 3 of draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.37.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:
Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Benin, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burundi, Canada, Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guinea, Guyana, Haiti, Hungary, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lesotho, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Venezuela, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against:
India

Abstaining:
Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cuba, Estonia, France, Iceland, Israel, Latvia, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uzbekistan

Operative paragraph 3 of draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.37 was retained by 125 votes to 1, with 18 abstentions.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): I shall now call on those representatives who wish to explain their positions or votes on the paragraph just retained.

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): My delegation was constrained to abstain in the voting on operative paragraph 3 because of the earlier vote to retain the words "and South Asia". We, as is well known, support the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones, but as this paragraph itself states in the opening phrase, such treaties have to be reached on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among the States of the region. In the vote taken on the words "and South Asia", virtually all the States of that

region abstained, which means there is no agreement in South Asia now for the creation of a nuclear-weapon-free zone. In those circumstances, the retention of those words is in direct contradiction to the earlier phrase in the same operative paragraph which calls for the establishment of such zones on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among the States of the region. That contradiction is a flaw that cannot be reconciled in the present phraseology. Therefore, my delegation was constrained to abstain in the voting on the entire paragraph despite our support for the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones, including in the Middle East.

Mr. King (United States of America): The United States abstained in the voting on the last three words of operative paragraph 3 of draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.37 because the request made by Pakistan has raised a major issue. That issue is whether the States of the region desire a nuclear-weapon-free zone on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at. It appears that they do not. As desirable as such a zone might be for the rest of us, we believe that the general principle must govern. For the same reason, since the last three words remain in operative paragraph 3 the United States similarly abstained in the voting on operative paragraph 3.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): If no other delegation wishes to explain its position or vote, we will proceed to the voting on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.37 as a whole.

If no members wish to explain their position or vote before a decision is taken on the draft resolution as a whole, I shall call on the Secretary of the Committee to conduct the voting.

Mr. Lin Kuo-chung (Secretary of the Committee): The Committee will now proceed to the voting on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.37 as a whole.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Benin, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Canada, Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guinea, Guyana, Haiti, Iceland, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Moldova, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against:

France, Monaco, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

Abstaining:

Bhutan, Bulgaria, Estonia, Georgia, Hungary, India, Israel, Latvia, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), Poland, Republic of Korea, Romania, Russian Federation

Draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.37, as a whole, was adopted by 129 votes to 4, with 14 abstentions.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): I now call on those representatives who wish to explain their votes or positions on the draft resolution just adopted.

Mr. Richier (France) (*interpretation from French*): I am speaking on behalf of France, the United Kingdom and the United States to explain our position on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.37, entitled "Nuclear-weapon-free southern hemisphere and adjacent areas". Our three delegations voted against this draft resolution because, despite our regular consultations and work with the sponsors, it still does not adequately address our main concern and still contains a fundamental ambiguity. Let me explain why.

We remain concerned that the thrust of the draft resolution is to prepare the ground for the establishment of the southern hemisphere as a nuclear-weapon-free zone. Since all land territory in the southern hemisphere, with the exception of a few small islands, is already covered by nuclear-weapon-free zones, the only new areas that such a zone could cover would be the high seas. Many delegations assert that this is not the intention of the draft resolution and point out that it makes reference to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. But if the new zone will not cover the high seas, then what will it add to the existing zones? Thus we can only conclude that the true aim of some sponsors is indeed to create a new zone that covers international waters. Such a step would be inconsistent with international law and unacceptable to all delegations that respect the law of the sea.

Despite that and other, lesser problems, we acknowledge that the sponsors of draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.37 made some useful improvements to this year's text, although these changes were still not enough to overcome our general concern about the purpose of the draft resolution. We hope that next year the sponsors will be able to offer a text that satisfies all of us. We stand ready to continue to work with them with to that end.

I wish to emphasize that our vote on this draft resolution should in no way call into question our firm commitment to the Treaties of Tlatelolco, Rarotonga, Pelindaba and the Antarctic, nor do we have any objections in principle to the establishment of new nuclear-weapon-free zones, which can make an important contribution to both regional and global security provided they are supported by all States in the region concerned and are embodied in appropriate treaties that include provisions for full-scope International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards.

Mr. Li Changhe (China) (*interpretation from Chinese*): China has all along respected and supported efforts by countries to establish nuclear-weapon-free zones on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at. On the basis of this position, China signed and ratified the relevant protocols to the Treaties of Tlatelolco, Pelindaba, Rarotonga and the Antarctic. Meanwhile, China actively supports the countries of the South-East Asian region to establish such a zone, and we are consulting with the countries of that region with regard to the problems of the protocols so as to be able to sign the protocol as soon as possible.

My delegation believes that the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones is significant for the promotion of nuclear disarmament, the prevention of nuclear proliferation and the promotion of international and regional peace and security. My delegation also believes that any nuclear-weapon-free zone treaty should be in line with the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter and recognized international norms. The zones should be established by the countries concerned on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at by them and in the light of the practical situation of the countries of the region concerned.

The scope of such a zone should not cover the continental shelf and the special economic zone, nor should it cover areas whose sovereignty and maritime rights are the subject of dispute with countries outside the zone. Countries of the zone should not shirk their obligations using the excuse of military alliances.

My delegation notes that draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.37, entitled "Nuclear-weapon-free southern hemisphere and adjacent areas", makes reference to the applicable principles and rules of international law relating to the freedom of the high seas and the rights of passage through maritime space, including those of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

It is our understanding that this draft resolution does not seek to create legal obligations additional to those already contained in the existing nuclear-weapon-free zone treaties.

For these reasons, my delegation voted in favour of the draft resolution.

Ms. Kunadi (India): With regard to operative paragraph 3 of the draft resolution, which refers to the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in South Asia, it has been our consistent policy that the proposal for nuclear-weapon-free zones can be based only on arrangements freely arrived at among the States of the region concerned. There is no consensus on the proposal for a nuclear-weapon-free zone in South Asia. There is thus a contradiction which operative paragraph 3 ignores. Therefore, we called for a separate vote and voted against that operative paragraph.

The contradictions in the draft resolution become even more apparent when the reference to a nuclear-weapon-free zone in South Asia is seen in the context of recent developments. Therefore, operative paragraph 3 does not

correspond to reality. We understand that it has been retained at the insistence of one sponsor of the draft resolution that is not from South Asia, even when the delegation that had originally sought its inclusion had given its approval for deletion. This makes a mockery of the stipulation that the arrangements should be freely arrived at among the States of the region concerned. On this analogy, India could just as well propose that East Asia and Europe should be added after South Asia.

This operative paragraph distorts the coherence and consistency of the draft resolution. We have therefore abstained in the voting on the draft resolution as a whole.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): We have heard the last speaker in explanation of vote.

The Committee will now take action on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.47.

A recorded vote has been requested.

(*spoke in English*)

I call on the Secretary of the Committee to conduct the voting.

Mr. Lin Kuo-chung (Secretary of the Committee): Draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.47, entitled "Nuclear disarmament" was introduced by the representative of Myanmar at the 21st meeting, on 2 November 1998. Besides the sponsors listed in the draft resolution, additional sponsors are contained in document A/C.1/53/INF/2 and Add.1. The following countries have also become sponsors of the draft resolution: Bhutan and the Republic of Angola.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Algeria, Angola, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Benin, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Chad, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Fiji, Ghana, Guinea, Guyana, Haiti, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Jamaica, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Mauritania, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against:

Andorra, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

Abstaining:

Argentina, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Chile, Cyprus, Japan, Kazakhstan, Malta, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, San Marino, South Africa, Ukraine, Uzbekistan

Draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.47 was adopted by 87 votes to 40, with 15 abstentions.

[Subsequently, the delegations of Bhutan and Côte d'Ivoire informed the Secretariat that they had intended to vote in favour.]

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): I shall now call now on those representatives who wish to explain their positions or votes on the draft resolution just adopted.

Mr. Hayashi (Japan): I should like to explain Japan's abstention in the voting on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.47, entitled "Nuclear disarmament".

I have already referred, in my explanation of vote on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.14, to Japan's fervent desire that the use of nuclear weapons should not be repeated and its firm belief that continuous efforts should be made towards a world free of nuclear weapons.

Having said that, as far as draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.47 is concerned, I would like to state that the idea contained in this draft resolution, especially the

element of a specified framework of time for the elimination of nuclear weapons, does not command the support of all the nuclear-weapon States and many other non-nuclear-weapon States. Therefore, Japan cannot regard this draft resolution as having been formulated on the basis of appropriate considerations and consultations.

This year again, the draft resolution on this subject does not refer to the highly important Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and its review process. The NPT, in our view, is one of the most effective, realistic and solid frameworks for the promotion of nuclear disarmament. Rather than embracing the idea of the elimination of nuclear weapons within a specified framework of time, the Government of Japan intends to pursue the goal of realizing a world free of nuclear weapons through the following set of efforts.

First, with regard to the reduction of nuclear weapons among the nuclear-weapon States, the Government of Japan intends to urge the Russian Federation and the United States of America to pursue their efforts in the START process. In this connection, Japan would like to continue to play its part in assisting the Russian Federation with the dismantlement of its nuclear arsenals. Japan would also like to request the other nuclear-weapon States to make further efforts in the field of nuclear disarmament.

Secondly, with regard to multilateral endeavours, the Government of Japan intends to make efforts for, first, the success of the NPT Review Conference scheduled for the year 2000; secondly, the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT); thirdly, the advancement and early conclusion of negotiations for the fissile material cut-off treaty; and, fourthly, the commencement of multilateral discussions concerning possible measures following a fissile material cut-off treaty.

Thirdly, in view of the substantial difference of opinion in the international community on how to advance nuclear disarmament, the Government of Japan will continue its endeavour to bridge the gap and nurture common understandings among States for the shared cause of realizing a nuclear-weapon-free world.

The draft resolution also contains some new elements which do not command our support.

Mr. González (Chile) (*interpretation from Spanish*): With regard to our vote on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.47, Chile has always advocated preferential treatment for nuclear disarmament from the international community. For that reason we agree with most of the references and ideas contained in the draft resolution, including those relating to the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the *Legality of the Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons*, the Conventions on chemical and biological weapons and the declaration entitled "Towards a nuclear-weapon-free world: the need for a new agenda".

We wish to highlight in particular operative paragraph 7, which makes a clear appeal to the nuclear-weapon States

> "pending the achievement of a total ban on nuclear weapons through a Nuclear Weapons Convention, to agree on an internationally and legally binding instrument of the joint undertaking not to be the first to use nuclear weapons; and calls upon all States to conclude an internationally and legally binding instrument on security assurances of non-use and threat of use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear weapon States".

However, we do not agree with certain aspects of the draft resolution, which we feel do not contribute to the achievement of the goals of the draft resolution as a whole. They do not facilitate effective dialogue making it possible to make progress towards negotiations on prohibiting the use or the threat of use of nuclear weapons and towards the complete elimination of nuclear weapons. There are certain preconditions that would unfortunately make these delicate negotiations more difficult and would not break the impasse that now exists in this field. I refer in particular to the requirement that there be strict timetables for the major stages of such negotiations. Therefore, very much to our regret, we have had to abstain in the voting on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.47 although we agree broadly with its objectives.

Mr. Li Changhe (China) (*interpretation from Chinese*): The Chinese delegation voted in favour of draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.47. China supports the main thrust and objectives of the draft resolution and shares many of the views of the non-aligned and non-nuclear-weapon States on the issue of nuclear disarmament. We are all in favour of the complete prohibition and total elimination of nuclear weapons. We all believe, just as in the case of the complete prohibition of chemical and biological weapons, in the imposition of a complete prohibition of nuclear weapons so as to achieve a nuclear-weapon-free world at an early date. We are all opposed to the policy of nuclear deterrence, which is based on first use of nuclear weapons. We are all in favour of negotiations to conclude an international legal

instrument providing guarantees against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States.

The Chinese delegation would like to take this opportunity to point out that nuclear-weapon States have different historical backgrounds, different kinds of regimes for developing nuclear weapons and different nuclear-weapon policies. China, under very special historical conditions, was compelled to develop a small number of nuclear weapons for the sole purpose of self-defence. It has never posed a threat to any country.

As a nuclear-weapon State, China has never shirked its responsibility and obligations for nuclear disarmament. On the very first day that China possessed nuclear weapons, it declared solemnly that at no time and under no circumstances would China be the first to use nuclear weapons.

China also unconditionally made a commitment not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States or nuclear-weapon-free zones. China is the only nuclear-weapon State that has made and abided by such a commitment. China has never participated in the nuclear arms race and has never deployed nuclear weapons outside its own territories, or used or threatened to use nuclear weapons against other countries.

This position of China's is highly significant for the prevention of nuclear war and has also played a positive role in promoting the nuclear disarmament process and in reducing the risk of nuclear proliferation. We are ready to work together with other countries in a joint effort to establish a nuclear-weapon-free world at an early date. We believe that specific steps and timetables for nuclear disarmament should be worked out by the international community within the framework of negotiations on a convention completely prohibiting nuclear weapons.

The countries that are in possession of the largest and most sophisticated nuclear arsenals have a long way to go in nuclear disarmament. They should continue to fulfil their special responsibilities for nuclear disarmament. I should like to point out in addition, as regards the specific nuclear disarmament measures contained in the draft resolution, that in the current international situation conditions for their implementation do not yet exist.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): We have heard the last speaker in explanation of vote.

We shall now take up draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.33, which is in cluster 4, "Conventional weapons".

(*spoke in English*)

If no delegation wishes to make a general statement on cluster 4, "Conventional weapons", we shall proceed to take action on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.33, entitled "Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction".

A recorded vote has been requested.

I call on the representative of Lebanon, who wishes to speak in explanation of vote before a decision is taken.

Mr. Ayoub (Lebanon) (*interpretation from Arabic*): Lebanon supports the principle on which the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction is based. My delegation would like to thank States such as Canada, Belgium, Norway and Austria for their efforts in holding preparatory meetings to draft the Convention and have it signed in Ottawa last year.

However, Lebanon has not signed the Convention to date because Israel continues to occupy a portion of our territory and rejects the immediate and unconditional application of Security Council resolution 425 (1978), adopted on 19 March 1978. We request all countries concerned not to limit their mine-clearance assistance to countries parties to the Convention alone, but to extend financial and technical assistance for mine clearance to all States that have need of it without any exception. The Lebanese delegation, because of its interest in protecting human lives, and appreciating and respecting the noble efforts some States have made and continue to make, will vote in favour of draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.33.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): We have heard the only speaker in explanation of vote before the voting.

I call on the Secretary of the Committee to conduct the voting.

Mr. Lin Kuo-chung (Secretary of the Committee): Draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.33, entitled "Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction", was introduced by the representative of

Canada at the 19th meeting, on 30 October 1998. Besides the sponsors listed in the draft resolution, additional sponsors are listed in document A/C.1/53/INF/2 and Add.1. In this connection, a note by the Secretariat concerning the responsibilities entrusted to the Secretary-General under the draft resolution is contained in document A/C.1/53/L.60.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Bahamas, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Canada, Chad, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guinea, Guyana, Haiti, Hungary, Iceland, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Mozambique, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Moldova, Romania, San Marino, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Venezuela, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against:

None

Abstaining:

Azerbaijan, China, Cuba, Egypt, India, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Israel, Kazakhstan, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), Morocco, Myanmar, Pakistan, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Syrian Arab Republic, United States of America, Viet Nam

Draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.33 was adopted by 124 votes to none, with 19 abstentions.

[Subsequently, the delegation of Kuwait informed the Secretariat that it had intended not to participate in the voting.]

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): I shall now call on those representatives who wish to explain their votes or positions on the draft resolution just adopted.

Mr. Reimaa (Finland): In the context of the decision just taken on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.33, entitled "Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction", I would like to state that Finland is committed to the objective of achieving the goal of a total and effective ban on anti-personnel landmines. That is also the objective of the draft resolution.

Finland has welcomed the Ottawa Convention as an important step towards a worldwide ban on anti-personnel landmines. The early entry into force of the Convention contributes further to these expectations. It is in that context that Finland voted in favour of the draft resolution and thereby supported the draft resolution without prejudice to its position with regard to operative paragraph 1 of that draft resolution.

The global normative framework regarding anti-personnel landmines will be further strengthened with the entry into force of the strengthened Protocol II of the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or To Have Indiscriminate Effects. Finland also believes that the Conference on Disarmament should continue to address the issue with a particular focus on transfers of anti-personnel landmines to complement and support the Ottawa Convention.

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): Pakistan has been a long-standing adherent of the United Nations Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or To Have Indiscriminate Effects (CCW), which includes the Protocol on restrictions governing the use of anti-personnel landmines. Our commitment to observe its rules reflects our conviction that the Convention and its Protocols represent a bulwark against the indiscriminate use of certain conventional weapons, including anti-personnel landmines. Even before the Convention came into existence, Pakistan had a war-

time record of strict observance of humanitarian laws which were later embodied in the Convention and its Protocols. Our adherence to the Convention and its Protocols was therefore without hesitation or delay.

Pakistan, unfortunately, has a long border and lives under the constant threat of the use of force. We are therefore constrained at this time to have resort to anti-personnel landmines for the purposes of our defensive strategy. We believe that at this moment the international community could usefully focus on, first, the universal adherence to the new Protocol II of the CCW because we believe this Protocol will lead to the resolution of almost all the humanitarian problems that have resulted from the widespread and indiscriminate use of anti-personnel landmines.

Secondly, the international community, especially those nations in a financial position to do so, must support an invigorated programme to eliminate landmines which have been laid in the past and which are responsible for an estimated 25,000 fatalities each year.

Thirdly, we believe that the Conference on Disarmament could also take some steps to promote progress towards the ultimate goal of prohibiting anti-personnel landmines without jeopardizing the security of States.

Given this approach and our continued reliance on anti-personnel landmines for the purposes of our defensive strategy, my delegation has been constrained to abstain in the voting on the draft resolution while applauding and appreciating the noble objectives it seeks to promote.

Mr. Karem (Egypt): In explaining Egypt's abstention, I would like to state that the problem of landmines in Egypt dates back to the 1940s, when the warring Allied and Axis forces of the Second World War left behind 17.5 million landmines and pieces of unexploded ordnance in the area of El Alamein. That number has subsequently risen, as a result of the wars with Israel, to 22.7 million landmines covering an area of 228,000 hectares in Egypt. Obstacles impeding our efforts to clear these areas include the enormous size of the area in which the mines are planted, the metal oxidization of the trigger mechanisms of the mines, rendering them more dangerous, and the sudden movements of sand, which increase the depth of these mines and thus hamper normal detection and removal procedures. These factors caused 8,317 casualties in the period from 1945 to 1996.

Although Egypt did not take part in planting these landmines, the Egyptian armed forces successfully removed 11 million of them during the period 1981 to 1991 without any foreign assistance. This pioneering operation took a heavy toll on our limited capabilities and has, as a result, diverted much-needed resources from other sectors. There is therefore a dire need for extensive assistance, including special demining equipment.

Allow me now to say a few words on the draft resolution under consideration. Although the Egyptian Government supports the humanitarian objective which inspired the conception of and led to the conclusion of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, as well as subsequent draft resolutions submitted by Canada to the General Assembly, Egypt continues to see this Convention in the light of certain concerns. Before listing these concerns, we wish to laud the efforts made by Canada in this respect.

The concerns can be summarized as follows: first, the Convention did not lay down a binding legal framework recognizing the responsibility of States that have deployed landmines in the territories of other States, and hence did not provide for commitments by these States to remove those mines. As a result, the Convention did not adequately deal with or provide for assurances in the field of assistance in landmine clearance. This prompted the adoption of resolution 1983/30, entitled "Injurious effects of anti-personnel landmines", without a vote by the fiftieth session of the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, on 26 August 1998, in Geneva. This resolution urges, in operative paragraph 5,

> "all countries responsible for the laying of anti-personnel landmines in foreign territories to assume full responsibility for the necessary mine clearance operations and to cooperate with the host countries for this purpose in every possible way, in particular developing countries".

Secondly, the Convention did not take into consideration the legitimate right of States to self-defence, as provided in Article 51 of the United Nations Charter, or the legitimate right to protect national security by all means, including the use of mines under certain conditions and demarcations, especially in the absence of other financially feasible alternatives. That is a matter of cardinal importance for countries with extended and otherwise-difficult-to-protect borders prone to terrorist infiltration,

smuggling of arms and explosives, banditry, drug-trafficking, and so on.

Although some addressed the issue of a so-called viable alternative to anti-personnel landmines, no operational measure or conceivable solution was presented to help address the concern of States which exhibited a readiness to make progress towards a total prohibition but, at the same time, needed a substitute method to protect their own national security. As time went by, these demands went unheeded. It also became evident that the means to produce and use such a viable alternative was restricted to only a few States, thereby creating an asymmetry in the security requirements among regional States. Those that needed this new and advanced form of high technology necessary for self-defence had to fall victim to a new form of dependency by relying heavily on extensive imports from limited producers. In the interim, national security imperatives were left behind, ignored and hanging loose.

Thirdly, despite all this, Egypt chose not to boycott but attended, and actively participated in as an observer, all meetings associated with the Ottawa process. Egyptian delegations comprising joint representatives from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Defence participated in all preparatory meetings, such as those held in Budapest, Geneva, Vienna, Oslo, and so on. In Brussels, Egypt introduced a non-paper which underscored concerns previously highlighted. In all such meetings the Egyptian delegation spoke, distributed pamphlets and special written and photographic material, explaining the magnitude of the problem and our earnest request for international recognition and support. We spoke very vehemently of our effort and our contacts with the Office of the former Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and with those directly concerned, as well as of our earnest request to parties to shoulder their responsibilities.

As mentioned earlier, the enormous number of landmines planted in such vast areas of my country has altered the demographic edifice by hindering economic development. The problem presents itself today more acutely than ever, as the population of Egypt grows and the need for expansion outside the narrow Nile valley into the surrounding affected areas becomes a vital necessity. Almost 97 per cent of the population of Egypt lives in the area surrounding the Nile valley, which constitutes less than 6 per cent of the total land mass of Egypt. Egypt, which historically is the gift of the Nile, cannot continue to harbour more than 60 million individuals around a thin Nile valley.

Recently the Government has followed a "reach out" policy for new, uncharted areas implementing land reclamation, socio-economic development and agricultural projects. Furthermore, these crowded areas offer great potential for economic development due to favourable soil formation, the availability of subterranean water and seasonal rainfall that allows for pastures. Coupled with that, there are enormous prospects for oil and industrial expansion in the future. The area is also dotted with many significant ancient Roman sites dating back to the Byzantine period. The sites, a must for tourists, are not only the heritage of a single civilization but are in reality an asset for humanity. Not many of us know that the present beautiful city of Medina el Alamein, on Egypt's north-western Mediterranean coast, was originally a seaport that carried trade from Egypt's oases to the seaports of Europe.

Although we associated ourselves with the humanitarian aspect as well as with the need for a total ban on anti-personnel landmines, we could not comprehend the argument, forcefully put to us in every conceivable way, that certain areas deserve more attention than others, particularly the argument that "mines in deserts don't hurt, nor do they deserve immediate attention". Such a myopic vision makes a mockery of the axiom that development is one whole, indivisible process. Let me quote a number of eye-witness references of German soldiers belonging to the African battalion who were present at the great battle of El Alamein. They stated in Egypt, on 20 October 1998, in the ceremonies held in El Alamein, that they "were horrified at the impact of landmines levied cruelly on children, youngsters and the elderly". I invite those who make such arguments to read the article published in *The Guardian* on 9 December 1997 entitled "The Devil's Garden".

With regard to the methodology and machinery used to arrive at the Convention, the draft text was achieved outside the aegis of the Conference on Disarmament, which is the sole United Nations multilateral negotiating disarmament forum. Bypassing the Conference on Disarmament weakened and defeated the democratic process of multilateralism as well as the meaning of collective effort. Despite all that, we hope that this will soon be remedied and that the issue will find a proper place on the agenda of the Conference on Disarmament.

Mr. Phua (Singapore): Singapore's position on anti-personnel landmines has been clear and open. My country supports and will continue to support all initiatives against

the indiscriminate use of anti-personnel landmines, especially when directed at innocent civilians. To this end, in May 1996 Singapore declared a two-year moratorium on the export of anti-personnel landmines without self-neutralizing mechanisms. In February this year Singapore decided to expand the scope of its moratorium on the export of mines to cover all manner of anti-personnel landmines, not just those without self-neutralizing mechanisms. In addition, this moratorium is now effective for an indefinite future period.

At the same time, like several other countries, Singapore firmly believes that the legitimate security concerns and right to self-defence of any State cannot be disregarded. Therefore, my country is of the view that a blanket ban on all types of anti-personnel landmines might be counter-productive, especially if such a move might possibly compromise the security of its users.

Mr. Amar (Morocco) (*interpretation from French*): My delegation would like to explain its vote on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.33, entitled "Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction". Morocco supports the humanitarian objectives of this draft resolution and applauds Canada's efforts regarding anti-personnel landmines. Morocco continues to see draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.33 in the light of certain concerns regarding its security in the southern provinces. My delegation wishes to reiterate the position Morocco expressed with regard to the Convention during the voting on the First Committee's draft resolutions in the plenary meetings of the General Assembly at the fifty-second session. That position explains why my delegation abstained in the voting on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.33, on anti-personnel landmines.

Mr. Lee (Republic of Korea): My delegation wishes to make a brief comment in explanation of its vote on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.33, entitled "Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction".

My country experienced tremendous suffering because of the high-intensity conflict during the Korean War. In this regard, we have attached particular importance to the development of international humanitarian law and have upheld its basic principles. In this endeavour, anti-personnel landmines are no exception.

In joining international efforts to prevent suffering from the indiscriminate use of mines, my Government declared last year, and has implemented, an indefinite extension of its moratorium on the export of anti-personnel landmines. In the same vein, my country has also actively participated in United Nations mine action programmes, including through financial contributions, and will continue to do so. We firmly believe that a comprehensive and coordinated approach with the United Nations as a focal point will enable the international community to address its concern over the tremendous human and material loss caused by anti-personnel landmines.

Unfortunately, however, my Government was not in a position to join the Ottawa Convention designed to impose a total ban on the use of anti-personnel landmines, given our paramount security interests. As explained on many previous occasions, the use of anti-personnel landmines is indispensable for the defence of the demilitarized zone in the Korean peninsula, one of the most heavily armed areas in the world. Landmines are used there as a major defensive weapon in a specifically limited area. Thus, we cannot forgo immediately the use of anti-personnel landmines until the threat to our security is removed. We consider it desirable for the international community to take a more practical step towards the minimization of suffering caused by anti-personnel landmines, namely, by adopting a legally binding and universally applicable instrument aimed at banning the transfer of all kinds of anti-personnel landmines. My delegation sincerely hopes that the Conference on Disarmament can start negotiations on such a legal instrument at the earliest possible date.

For the foregoing reasons, my delegation abstained in the voting on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.33.

Mr. Sungar (Turkey): I would like to share with the Committee the considerations that led my delegation to cast a "yes" vote on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.33, entitled "Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction".

Turkey has unique security concerns which have been carefully factored into our principled policy on anti-personnel landmines. While fully conscious of the human suffering and casualties caused by the irresponsible and indiscriminate use of anti-personnel landmines, Turkey's long land borders need to be protected not only against trespassing but also to combat terrorism, drug-trafficking and illicit arms-trafficking.

Moreover, among the reasons we were initially unable to sign the Ottawa Convention was the fact that our neighbours to the south and south-east chose not to be parties to the Convention. During the negotiations, Turkey unsuccessfully sought the inclusion of an exception clause to the Convention which would free States parties of their treaty obligations vis-à-vis their common borders with those countries which had not become parties to the Convention.

It was precisely these reasons that compelled Turkey to abstain in the voting on the draft resolutions on this subject for the past two years and that prevented Turkey from signing the Ottawa Convention last year. We explained then and categorically state now that Turkey associates itself with the fundamental humanitarian considerations which have motivated the leaders of the Ottawa process. We welcome the Convention's entry into force on 1 March 1999. With the humanitarian aspects of the anti-personnel landmine problem in mind, we put into effect in 1996 a national moratorium banning the export and transfer of anti-personnel landmines. As a renewed expression of our determination to contribute to the ongoing efforts of the international community aimed at preventing further casualties, and our commitment to humanitarian objectives, we announced at the start of this Committee's meeting on 15 October our decision to extend that moratorium for another three years commencing from its expiry. We do not exclude the possibility of our signing the Ottawa Convention in the future, as and when our security concerns have been comprehensively and satisfactorily addressed. It is with these very considerations in mind that today we opted to vote in favour of draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.33.

The fact that some of the major historical producers and users of anti-personnel landmines have chosen to remain outside the Ottawa Convention — at this stage, at least — and that they have not been in a position to support past General Assembly draft resolutions and the one just adopted by the Committee underlines the need to deploy additional efforts with a view to bringing these countries closer to the norms set by the Convention. My Government continues to maintain that the Conference on Disarmament is the competent forum for negotiations that would address the security concerns of those States, enabling them to join an eventual ban to be achieved in stages.

In this connection, the Special Coordinator on anti-personnel landmines, Ambassador John Campbell of Australia, in his report on 27 August 1998, stated that agreement should be possible in the Conference on Disarmament to negotiate a ban on transfers of landmines and that such an agreement, if adopted by the major traditional producers and traders of anti-personnel landmines not yet parties to the Ottawa treaty, would represent a major and important step forward. We share this judgement and hope that others will also support the establishment of an ad hoc committee in the Conference on Disarmament to commence negotiations on a ban on transfers at an early date in the 1999 session of the Conference.

Mr. Benítez Versón (Cuba) (*interpretation from Spanish*): The position of my delegation on the question of anti-personnel landmines is well known, and in particular our position on the Convention on the prohibition of such weapons, which is the subject of draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.33. For that reason I will not explain my vote in much detail.

For Cuba the ultimate objective of negotiations on anti-personnel landmines has always been to guarantee maximum protection for the civilian population, not to limit the military capacity of States to protect their sovereignty and territorial integrity in keeping with the right to self-defence, as recognized in Article 51 of the United Nations Charter. The absence of any acknowledgement of this legitimate right in draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.33 is the basic reason for Cuba's abstention in the voting on the draft resolution. My country, which for nearly four decades has been fully exposed to a policy of aggression and hostility from the most economically, politically and militarily powerful country in the world, cannot afford to join in accepting the challenge of renouncing these types of weapons for the defence of its sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Cuba continues to fully support all efforts that, while maintaining the necessary balance between humanitarian concerns and national security, are aimed at eliminating the terrible effects on the civilian populations of many countries brought on by the irresponsible and indiscriminate use of anti-personnel landmines.

Mr. Dehghani (Islamic Republic of Iran): With regard to my delegation's vote on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.33, entitled "Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction", the Islamic Republic of Iran, as a country affected by millions of landmines, supports any genuine initiative that deals with a ban on all types of anti-personnel landmines. Accordingly, my Government declared a moratorium on the export of anti-personnel landmines and expedited the process of

acceding to the strengthened Protocol II of the 1980 Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or To Have Indiscriminate Effects.

However, since in our view the Ottawa Convention does not adequately address both security and humanitarian aspects of the landmines issue, we are not in a position to join that Convention at present. For this reason my delegation abstained in the voting on the draft resolution. We hope that the Conference on Disarmament will be able to start negotiations on a comprehensive and universally acceptable agreement on this subject.

Ms. Kunadi (India): My delegation wishes to share with the Committee the considerations which led it to abstain in the voting on the draft resolution. India remains committed to the objective of a non-discriminatory and universal ban on anti-personnel landmines. This objective can be achieved through a phased approach that enjoys international consensus and by addressing humanitarian concerns and the legitimate defence requirements of States. India has expressed its willingness to participate, in forthcoming international efforts based on such an approach, as it has participated in the past. We believe that the phased approach commends itself as a confidence-building process enabling States, especially those with long borders, to remain sensitive to their legitimate security needs while facilitating meaningful international efforts for addressing the critical humanitarian crisis that has resulted from long years of indiscriminate transfers and use of anti-personnel landmines.

We also believe that the process of the complete elimination of anti-personnel landmines will be facilitated by the availability of alternative non-lethal technologies that can perform cost-effectively the legitimate defensive role of anti-personnel landmines. We should also address and dedicate greater efforts to the critical and interrelated issues of mine clearance and mine-victim assistance.

Mr. Mesdoua (Algeria) (*interpretation from French*): My delegation voted in favour of draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.33, entitled "Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction", as we did in the voting on resolution 52/38 A, on the same issue, adopted at the fifty-second session of the General Assembly.

Algeria signed the Ottawa Convention and takes note of its forthcoming entry into force. We support a total prohibition of the use, stockpiling, production and transfer of anti-personnel mines. Therefore, we fully subscribe to and support the humanitarian and other objectives of the process. We remain committed to the objective of a universal prohibition of anti-personnel mines. We believe, nevertheless, that this objective will be attained only when the process has the support of the entire international community, when all States have joined the Convention, particularly those that produce landmines, and when adherence to it is really universal.

Mr. Li Changhe (China) (*interpretation from Chinese*): China abstained in the voting on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.33, and I should now like to explain our vote and state our views.

The Chinese Government has always taken seriously the humanitarian concerns caused by landmines. At the same time, we believe that the right approach to this question is to accommodate both humanitarian and security concerns. We hold that without compromising the legitimate right to self-defence and the principle of undiminished security for all countries, there should be appropriate and reasonable restriction on the use of landmines so as to eliminate their indiscriminate effects on innocent civilians worldwide. Therefore, we have different views on the Ottawa Convention and on the draft resolution on the Convention, A/C.1/53/L.33.

China believes that the harm done by landmines to civilians should be addressed with two objectives in mind: appropriate and reasonable restrictions on the use of landmines and the strengthening of international mine-clearing efforts.

With regard to the first objective, the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or To Have Indiscriminate Effects and its amended landmine Protocol could constitute a guarantee for the achievement of the first objective. China actively participated in the negotiations on the Protocol. China has ratified it, and I am very pleased to inform the Committee that this afternoon China will deposit the instrument of ratification with the Secretary-General. We hope that more countries will accede to the Protocol so that those countries that cannot give up the use of landmines for self-defence will be able to impose further restrictions on the use of landmines so as to prevent harm to civilians.

With regard to the second objective, the Chinese Government has actively joined international mine-clearing efforts and has provided assistance to mine-affected countries, thus contributing within its capability to the post-conflict reconstruction of the countries concerned.

In November 1997 the President of the People's Republic of China solemnly declared that China would actively support international cooperation in mine-clearing efforts. Despite the fact that since the beginning of this year China has suffered from the worst flooding of the century, and its disaster relief work has imposed a huge financial burden on the Government, China not long ago formulated its international mine-clearing assistance programme so as to provide help, within its capabilities, to mine-affected countries. That programme includes the following: first, this year we are pledging $100,000 to the United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund for Assistance in Mine Clearance earmarked for activities in Bosnia and Herzegovina; secondly, in 1999 and 2000 China will cooperate with the relevant agencies of the United Nations to hold two training courses in China; and thirdly, by 2001 China will pledge mine-detecting and mine-clearing equipment to the United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund, earmarked for use in those countries that receive our training. We believe that with the joint efforts of the Chinese Government and the relevant agencies of the United Nations this mine-clearing programme can be implemented in a satisfactory manner so that more land in mine-affected countries can be cleared of mines.

Mr. Than (Myanmar): I should like to place on record the position of my delegation on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.33, relating to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction. Myanmar supports the banning exports, transfers and indiscriminate use of anti-personnel landmines. We respect the decision of the countries that have signed and ratified the Convention on anti-personnel landmines. Myanmar did not participate in the Ottawa process, nor is it a signatory or State party to the Convention. We believe that we should take a step-by-step approach to this question. What is actually causing death and injury to innocent children, women and men is the indiscriminate use of the anti-personnel landmines. Transfers and exports of anti-personnel landmines also contribute to their proliferation, thereby increasing the chances of their indiscriminate use.

The transfer and indiscriminate use of anti-personnel landmines is the real issue that needs to be urgently addressed, and such transfers and use should be banned in an international legal instrument. As all of us are aware, a significant number of the signatory countries still have reservations on the issue of anti-personnel landmines. It is obvious that a consensus does not yet exist among Member States of the United Nations at present on placing a total ban on anti-personnel landmines. It is also worth noting that other international agreements on humanitarian law have evolved out of consensus among States on banning the use of certain inhumane weapons, and the case of anti-personnel landmines is conspicuous by the absence of such a consensus.

Apart from being a humanitarian issue, this is certainly a disarmament subject. It is therefore imperative that in dealing with this issue the legitimate security interests of States be fully taken into account. In this regard, we should like to stress here that the legitimate right of every State to self-defence in matters of its national security must be recognized and respected. We are also in favour of further pursuing the issue of anti-personnel landmines in the Conference on Disarmament, which we believe is the appropriate forum to negotiate agreements on such issues.

For these reasons my delegation abstained in the voting on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.33.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): We have heard the last speaker in explanation of vote.

The Committee will now take action on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.30, in cluster 6, "Confidence-building measures, including transparency in armaments".

(*spoke in English*)

I now call on those delegations wishing to make general statement on that cluster.

Mr. Ayoub (Lebanon) (*interpretation from Arabic*): My delegation has considered carefully the draft resolutions on transparency of military expenditures and transparency in armaments, contained in draft resolutions A/C.1/53/L.30, L.39 and L.43. The Lebanese delegation wishes to make the following comments..

First, in general terms, the three draft resolutions are very similar in substance and form, with only a few differences that do not justify the repetition. My delegation does not see why three draft resolutions were submitted under the heading title of transparency of military expenditures and weapons. In view of the efforts made by

this Committee to rationalize its work, we hope that we can look forward to the possibility of having one single draft resolution under one title at the fifty-fourth session.

Secondly, despite our former reservations and the views expressed by some delegations during the past few years, the general trend in draft resolutions under the title "Transparency of military expenditures" or "Transparency in armaments" has been to involve only conventional weapons. My delegation believes that the continuation of that trend leads to incompleteness; the topic should be supplemented by transparency covering all kinds of weapons, including nuclear, bacteriological and chemical weapons of mass destruction. Failure to expand the framework of transparency in armaments serves only the nuclear-weapon States.

Thirdly, the submission by States of information regarding their military expenditures and the categories of weapons they possess should confirm that they are not concealing military expenditures or endeavours to develop and produce weapons that remain secret until a crisis reveals them to the world. The credibility of transparency depends on the confidence of States, and we hope that this will be taken into account in general and complete terms so that efforts to reduce armaments and to build trust do not adversely affect the need and the desire to move ahead affirmatively towards general and complete disarmament.

Mr. Lee (Republic of Korea): My delegation wishes to make some brief general remarks on cluster 6, and especially on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.43. The Government of the Republic of Korea has participated in the Register of Conventional Arms since 1993. We believe that efforts to enhance transparency in armaments provide an initial step for building confidence among the countries concerned.

The Register has been instrumental in enhancing transparency among countries and has greatly contributed to building confidence throughout the world. In this regard, my delegation attaches particular importance to ensuring universality of participation in order to enhance the effectiveness of the Register. My delegation would like to call upon all countries which have not yet done so to report their data on arms transfers to the United Nations Register.

Though my delegation is fully supportive of the draft resolution, we are still of the view that discreet and careful consideration is indispensable in exploring the future direction, and expanding the scope for further development, of the Register. The security interests of each country vary depending on the specific conditions of the country. The working out of a more acceptable and realistic formula that will ensure a wider participation of countries throughout the world is indispensable for achieving the objective of the mechanism.

This year the Republic of Korea joined the other sponsors of the draft resolution. My delegation hopes that the draft resolution will be adopted with the overwhelming support of member countries.

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): In our view, greater transparency cannot be a substitute for efforts to reduce tensions and to resolve conflicts as a means of halting arms races in various parts of the world. Transparency by itself cannot lead to a reduction in military expenditures. The basic causes that impel States to acquire defensive arms and to maintain armed forces at certain levels relate to their own national and regional security environments. It is these national and regional security problems that need to be addressed by the international community as a means of halting an arms build-up in various parts of the world.

Moreover, the specific methodologies proposed for guiding reductions in military expenditures are, in our view, also based on fallacious grounds. Specified percentages of budgets are meaningless when States are required to acquire and maintain armed forces at levels that are necessary for the purposes of self-defence, especially against larger neighbours. It is obvious that smaller countries in many parts of the world are obliged to maintain higher percentages of their budgets for such defence expenditures. Any approach that seems to draw a line on the basis of such budgets inherently favours the large and richer countries against the small and poorer countries. Therefore, this approach is not one that should be acceptable to the large majority of the international community, which consists of smaller and poorer States.

We believe that disarmament, especially conventional disarmament, should be promoted on a more equitable basis by addressing the problem in its reality — that is, in terms of the men and machines deployed, the methodologies for their deployment and their state of readiness. It is only through such realistic and hard efforts at negotiations that balanced reductions can be achieved in various parts of the world. Indeed, the experience in Europe at the conclusion of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) confirms that this was the approach that was finally successful. We believe that this is the approach that will have to be followed in other parts of the world as well.

Mr. Al-Hassan (Oman) (*interpretation from Arabic*): My country has always supported resolutions concerning transparency. At this session my delegation will proceed along the same lines and therefore will vote in favour of all draft resolutions under this agenda item, including draft resolutions A/C.1/53/L.30, L.39 and L.43.

However, we wish to assert very clearly that that position should not be interpreted as total acceptance of all these draft resolutions. Here we wish to point out certain shortcomings in the draft resolutions and in the concept of transparency in general, and the lack of references to all kinds of armaments, especially weapons of mass destruction.

Despite our position in support of transparency, we would like to add our country's voice to the common voice of Arab countries concerning the Register of Conventional Arms. We hope to have real, meaningful thinking on the Register that takes into account all relevant concepts. We wish to support another delegation's point regarding the need to combine draft resolutions dealing with a single item — namely, transparency — so that in the future the Committee will be able to reduce the degree of redundancy in its draft resolutions.

The Chairman: The Committee will now proceed to take action on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.30, entitled "Objective information on military matters, including transparency of military expenditures".

The sponsors of the draft resolution have expressed the wish that the draft resolution be adopted by the Committee without a vote. If I hear no objection, I will take it that the Committee wishes to act accordingly.

I call on the Secretary of the Committee.

Mr. Lin Kuo-chung (Secretary of the Committee): Draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.30, entitled "Objective information on military matters, including transparency of military expenditures", was introduced by the representative of Germany at the 19th meeting, on 30 October 1998. Besides the sponsors listed in the draft resolution, additional sponsors are listed in document A/C.1/53/INF/2 and Add.1. Bosnia and Herzegovina has also become a sponsor.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): I call on the representative of Syria.

Mr. Abou-Hadid (Syrian Arab Republic): In the Arabic version of draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.30, Germany, which introduced the draft resolution, is not mentioned in the list of sponsors.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): I see no objection to draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.30 being adopted without a vote. If no delegation wishes to explain its position or vote before a decision is taken, we shall now take action on the draft resolution.

Draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.30 was adopted.

The Chairman *(interpretation from French)*: If no delegation wishes to explain its position on the draft resolution just adopted, we will stop our consideration of draft resolutions for today.

Tomorrow members will have a new informal paper listing the draft resolutions to be taken up.

As members will recall, at the beginning of the meeting one delegation requested that action on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.39 be postponed. Another delegation asked that action on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.17/Rev.1 be postponed. Action on those two draft resolutions will therefore be postponed.

(*spoke in English*)

On the other hand, the delegation that had asked for the postponement of draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.40, entitled "Prevention of an arms race in outer space", is now ready for a vote. Members will therefore find that draft resolution on the list tomorrow unless another delegation asks for a postponement. Is that clear?

I call on the representative of Jordan.

Mr. Aamiry (Jordan): I left this matter to the very end of the day. I wonder if it would be possible, after we take a vote, to leave the voting board on for as long a period as possible, so that it would remain on while the various delegations are explaining their votes after the voting.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): That will present no problem.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.